# Resisting Peer Pressure

October is filled with many reasons to celebrate—hay rides, apple orchards, homecoming, Halloween, and more. With all these fun activities to enjoy, October comes with many dangers and pressures to be aware of. We here at Mental Health America of Porter County find it important to assess the risks of peer pressure during this time, and how it might affect your safety.

You may find your peers pressuring you to go to parties where there will be underage drinking, or ask you to engage in disrespectful pranks such as putting toilet paper on houses or smashing pumpkins. It is important to be mindful of yourself and others so that everyone can have a fun and safe October. Here are some helpful tips from teensforlife.com on how to say no to peer-pressure.

**Be prepared.** Know what kind of activities will be going on at the parties you plan to attend, and think of ways you will say no if something is offered to you. Have a back-up plan in case you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. Practice having confidence when you reject a substance or activity, and then people will respect your decision.

**Avoid it.**  If possible, make other plans with friends or family that you trust. Plan a get-together at your house before homecoming. You can plan fun activities such as pumpkin carving and hay-rides. Think of fun alternatives for suggestions that may sound unsafe or uncomfortable.

**Be proud.** Saying no to peer pressure is a hard thing to do, especially if you consider these peers to be good friends. You are doing yourself and your friends a tremendous favor by keeping them out of harm’s way.

If you or a friend is struggling with substance abuse, peer pressure, or have more questions about October safety, please get help from a trusted adult.